

In the days after that startling announcement, people of all ages found themselves looking to the skies, wondering if we could answer this daunting challenge. Our curiosity and our ingenuity would again be put to the test as we all tried to help in the effort to bring about that "one giant step for mankind" that wasn't to come for several more years.

My friends and I in junior high banded together—although we were all very young—to help. We wanted to learn all we could about rockets so we could become rocketeers or at least we tried our best to be worthy of the title. Once again, we had a difficult goal to reach for, and we were proud to think of ourselves as part of that call to action.

Of course, President John F. Kennedy then issued the challenge to the Nation that we would send a man to the Moon and return him safely to Earth. It sounded impossible, but with American know-how we were able to develop and put into action a plan that made it happen.

When the time came, the world watched with wonder and amazement as Neil Armstrong took those first steps on the Moon and proved once again that whatever goals we set, we always seem to find the tools and talent we need to get the job done.

For my children, their generation's iconic moment came on September 11, when we were once again cruelly attacked by terrorists who had hijacked several planes and used them to destroy the World Trade Center and part of the Pentagon. It was a moment in time that everyone will long remember for the impact that day and the events surrounding it had on the world and our lives, an impact that continues to be felt.

Even though it was 10 years ago, for almost all of us, the images of September 11 are still fresh in our minds. We can remember where we were when we first heard the news that our Nation was under attack. We can remember how we felt as we watched the Twin Towers fall and the sense of loss as the harsh reality of all the lives that were lost that day became all too real.

There are many lessons learned as we watched the rescue crews, along with our police and firemen, attempt to save as many as they could from the building and then from the wreckage. It was a harsh reminder of how delicate and precious our lives are and how the gift can be taken from us at a moment's notice.

Yet out of all that was lost, there was the birth of something even greater, something more powerful and enduring. It was the sense of community, this sense of country that bound us together as one Nation, as one American. We stood side by side with our neighbors, our families, and even complete strangers, looking out for one another and helping those in need.

Terrorists thought we were a weak nation that would crumble in the face of violence. Those who wanted to hurt

us sent a clear message. Yet we sent another. American flags sprung up in every yard, flew from every building, and even hung from our overpasses. The powerfully simple message of the Stars and Stripes was our message: We are America and we stand together.

Like those moments before, the morning light the next day brought with it the firm resolve that we would, once again, come together as one to address that attack. Political differences would no longer separate us. Concern for our shared future was so strong it would unite us to face this threat to our well-being. Together, we resolved we would do everything we could to ensure that terrorism would never again take such a terrible toll from our Nation or any other nation.

I remember during that time being at events where ambassadors from around the world offered an outpouring of sympathy and comfort for our grieving Nation. I was touched by their sympathy and care for America. I was also pleased so many countries helped us to follow the money trails which led to the arrest and prosecution of countless terrorists.

In the years since that terrible day, justice has also been delivered by our brave service men and women who have once again answered the call to duty and taken up arms to rid the world of the network of terror wherever it is found. Thanks to their efforts, nations that had never known freedom before now dare to dream of a better tomorrow for themselves and for their children. People who had lived in fear under the tyranny of oppression will now have a say in their shared future as citizens of the world. Those who had known nothing but anguish and despair now have a reason to hope for a better life. The Middle East is still in turmoil as the people reach for freedom and individual prosperity.

C.S. Lewis once said:

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

I think it is clear that the pain we felt that day was sufficient to rouse us to all the action as it opened our hearts and our minds to God and each other.

In the days to come, the memories of all we witnessed on September 11 will stay with us and serve as a constant reminder that freedom isn't free. It often comes to us at all too great a cost. In that spirit we will never forget those who lost their lives that day, their loved ones and all who knew them and called them their friends. For this generation and those who follow, their memory will continue to inspire us to be ever vigilant and constantly on guard at the gates of freedom to ensure that this "one nation, under God, indivisible" will continue to be the home of "liberty and justice for all," for ourselves, for our children, and for many generations to come.

Let's remember September 11 and the feelings we had for our country and

each other. May we rekindle the sense of community, country, and world we felt then. May lasting good come out of chaos.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### DISASTER FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if we would pause a few minutes and think about what has gone on in America this year: We have had flooding on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and other rivers in the Midwest. To show the power of this flood, on the Mississippi River alone there are 3 million acres underwater—farmland. We have had devastating tornadoes in the South. These tornadoes don't have names but they have a viciousness that is hard to comprehend. In Joplin, MO, about 200 people were killed. There was devastation. It is believed those winds reached nearly 300 miles an hour. Some say they are the highest recorded winds ever. They eliminated everything in their path.

Wildfires in the South and the West have been extremely harsh. Take Texas alone. Fires have been burning in Texas for the last month. Two thousand homes have been destroyed, burned to the ground. The fires are still present. I heard today that they are about 50 percent controlled.

We now have had Hurricane Irene. The wake of damage from Hurricane Irene hit numerous States, States that usually have no damage, all up the coast. Vermont has no coastline but they were devastated. Hundreds of bridges were washed out in Vermont. Vermont is a sparsely populated State. There are about 600,000 people, I understand, in the whole State, but it has been really hurt. The largest office complex in the whole State, with some 1,700 employees, is out of operation, underwater.

Tropical Storm Lee quickly followed Irene. Tropical Storm Lee has left damage in lots of places. We haven't been hurt real hard here in the metropolitan area of the District of Columbia. I have been here quite a while and I can never remember it raining for a week at a time, but that is what we just had. It rained basically all last week. The Potomac River is very high, but other States have been hurt worse by Tropical Storm Lee. I don't remember the exact number of deaths because of Lee, but it is approximately 20. Here in Virginia a 12-year-old boy in his backyard was washed away.

Since the first of this year, President Obama has issued disaster declarations

for 48 States and the hurricane season is not over yet. The Commerce Department said this year we have had 10 disasters, each with more than \$1 billion in damage, and \$1 billion is an understatement when you talk about what happened with Irene. They say that will reach \$25 billion, that one storm. That is the most we have had in decades—probably the most ever.

No one should be surprised that the Federal Emergency Management Agency is about broke. As of today, they have a few hundred million dollars left, probably in the \$300 million range. In just the last 2 weeks, FEMA spent almost \$400 million out of the fund for Hurricane Irene and other disasters. That should not be out of that fund. That should be forward funded. So FEMA is dangerously close to running out of money.

To make sure FEMA will have enough money to meet the immediate needs for food, water, and emergency housing for victims of new disasters, on August 28 FEMA stopped approving funding for disaster recovery projects from past disasters. This means funding is on hold to rebuild schools, hospitals, roads, public utilities from past disasters like Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, the Mississippi River flood of 2008—they are still doing work there to renovate that area—the Tennessee flood of 2010 and tornadoes in Missouri and Alabama of days past. So we have hundreds of millions of dollars that need to be spent in places such as Joplin, MO. They are not spending money there in Joplin, MO. After all they have been through there, no money.

The need is urgent. That is why we are seeking to move to the House-passed revenue measure to serve as a vehicle for disaster relief. The House insists, as they should, that because of our Constitution's Origination Clause, all appropriation measures have to originate in the House. So we had to take a bill—the House bill we have here on the calendar—and that is why we have to move to the Burma revenue measure tonight to allow the Senate to address this disaster assistance.

The Burma sanctions bill is a bill that the Republican leader has been out in front of for ages. He has been the watchdog of this terrible war and adverse nature that is taking place in Burma. He has been out front on this issue, and I appreciate that very much.

Every year we pass these Burma sanctions unanimously. No one opposes them. The only reason anyone might be holding up this Burma sanctions bill is because my friends on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, do not want to allow the Senate to vote on disaster assistance. Why do we need to do that? How much more specific do I need to be? We need to help communities hit hard by flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes, and other acts of God. I would think twice if I were one of my Republican friends. I have gone over some of the areas where these tornadoes and these fires and other natural

disasters have occurred and this is our only hope of getting help for these States.

The House is indicating they are going to send us a bill, but they are playing around the edges of what needs to be done. We have a bill that was reported basically out of the Senate Appropriations Committee—from Democrats and from Republicans—supporting it. What is needed is about \$9 billion. We want to be in keeping with the Budget Deficit Reduction Act because in there we are allowed \$7 billion. That is the number we are going to put forward tomorrow on this bill. It would be a real shame if we are not allowed to move to this Burma sanctions bill because everyone voting no to proceed to this is voting no on assistance to these States. There is no other way to do it. We are not going to accept some small number the House sends over. We cannot do that. The House is planning on doing some of its usual stuff—I will say that in a positive sense—in sending us a continuing resolution that we must enact by the end of this month, and they want to stick in the funding for FEMA, which is very low. We cannot allow that to happen.

I hope everyone tonight at 5:30 will vote to allow us to go forward on this most important piece of legislation.

I would ask that the quorum call begin.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

#### APPROVING THE RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 66, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 66) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time during the quorum call I am about to suggest be divided equally between the majority and the minority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, our country is in a very serious economic crisis. We are told by Mr. Erskine Bowles and Senator Alan Simpson—Erskine Bowles was chosen by President Obama to head his debt commission. They gave a statement to the Budget Committee, on which I am ranking member, that this Nation has never faced a more predictable economic crisis based on the size of our debt. All of us know that.

The American people are angry with us. They cannot believe it is possible we are borrowing 40 cents of every dollar we spend. We are spending \$3.7 trillion this fiscal year ending September 30. We will take in \$2.2 trillion, give or take a few hundred billion. This is not acceptable. We cannot continue.

How did it happen? How is it possible we are borrowing 40 cents of every dollar that goes out the door, increasing the permanent debt of the United States? Well, one way is what is happening now before us on the bill that is being moved today by Majority Leader REID. It would add \$6.9 billion to the FEMA account for emergencies. We just saw the legislation less than an hour ago, maybe 30 minutes ago. Has anybody given any serious thought to that? Seven billion dollars? The general fund budget of the State of Alabama is \$2 billion.

Mr. President, \$7 billion is a lot of money, and we have not looked at it, we have not thought about it. It is above the budget, I guess above our budget numbers. We do not have a budget. Senator REID said earlier this year it would be foolish to have a budget—foolish to have a budget. We are now well over 860 days in this Senate without having passed a budget. Is that another reason we are spending the country into bankruptcy?

Well, I do not think this is an appropriate thing. I strongly oppose adding another emergency debt spending bill where we have not carefully examined every penny of it to make sure it is all necessary and appropriate. No one has seen those numbers and the analysis that would justify it.

I come from a State that was hammered with the worst series of tornadoes we have ever suffered in Alabama. I have been to those communities and towns and seen those families who have lost all they had, who have lost loved ones and have injured family members. I know we are going to need to have emergency spending for those programs. We have fires in Texas and we also have flooding. We know that.

We have certain money set aside for emergencies already. How much more do we need to spend? I do not know yet.